



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Soldier Missing from Korean War Accounted For

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of a U.S. soldier, missing from the Korean War, have been identified and will be returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

Army Sgt. Michael J. Barra, 18, of Ithaca, N.Y., will be buried Nov. 22, in Ithaca, N.Y. In late November 1950, Barra was assigned to Company C, 2nd Engineer Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division (ID), which was deployed north and northeast of Kunu-ri, North Korea, when their defensive line was attacked by Chinese forces, forcing the unit to withdraw to a more defensible position. Before they could disengage, the 2nd ID was forced to fight through a series of Chinese roadblocks, commonly known as "The Gauntlet." Barra was reported missing in action after the battle.

Returning American soldiers who had been held as prisoners of war and released after the Armistice, reported that Barra had been captured Dec. 1, 1950, by Chinese forces and died Feb. 20, 1951, in a prisoner of war camp, known as Camp 5, in Pyokdong, North Korea.

Between 1991 and 1994, North Korea turned over to the U.S. 208 boxes of human remains believed to contain more than 400 U.S. servicemen who fought during the war. North Korean documents, turned over at that time, indicated that some of the remains were recovered from the vicinity where Barra was believed to have died.

To identify Barra's remains, scientists from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools, to include two forms of DNA analysis; mitochondrial DNA, which matched his sister and brother and Y-STR DNA, which matched his brother.

Today, 7,874 Americans remain unaccounted for from the Korean War. Using modern technology, identifications continue to be made from remains that were previously turned over by North Korean officials or recovered by American recovery teams.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for Americans, who went missing while serving our country, visit the DPMO web site at www.dtic.mil/dpmo or call (703) 699-1169.

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